

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Elizabeth Durham on March 12, 2010.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 15, line 5: Please replace the term "material;" with the phrase -- material that comprises an orthoester or a poly(orthoester); --.

Claim 21, line 1: Please replace the phrase "material comprises" with the phrase -- material further comprises --.

Please rejoin claims 23-27 and 31, which were previously withdrawn.

Please cancel without prejudice claims 47-68 and 83.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. A new copy of the Form PTO-1449 that corresponds to the information disclosure statement filed April 12, 2006 has been attached to this action because one of the cited references in the "non-patent documents" sections fails to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP § 609. This reference does not provide the date of its

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publication and has thereby not been considered. A new copy of the Form PTO-1449 that corresponds to the information disclosure statement filed March 30, 2006, depicting the cited foreign document as considered by Examiner, has also been enclosed

3. Applicant is advised that the date of any re-submission of any item of information contained in this information disclosure statement or the submission of any missing element(s) will be the date of submission for purposes of determining compliance with the requirements based on the time of filing the statement, including all certification requirements for statements under 37 CFR 1.97(e). See MPEP § 609.05(a).

Reasons for Allowance

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of record does not teach or suggest a method of drilling including circulating through a drill bit a fluid that contains a viscosified fluid; a fluid-loss control additive; and a bridging agent that is a degradable material comprising an orthoester or a polyorthoester, forming a self-degrading filter cake including the bridging agent, and permitting said filter cake to self-degrade.

5. The closest prior art is USPN 5,783,527 to Dobson et al., hereinafter "Dobson'527". Dobson'527 discloses an alkaline water-based well fluid that deposits an easily degradable/removable filter cake on the sides of a borehole during a drilling operation, wherein the fluid contains one or more polysaccharide polymers, sized bridging particles, and a peroxide selected from alkaline earth metal peroxides, zinc peroxide, and mixtures thereof. However, Dobson'527 does not teach or suggest the

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drilling process forming a self-degrading filter cake including a bridging agent containing orthoester or polyorthoester.

6. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOHN J. FIGUEROA whose telephone number is (571)272-8916. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:00-6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Seidleck can be reached on (571) 272-1078. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/James J. Seidleck/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1796

JJF/JJS